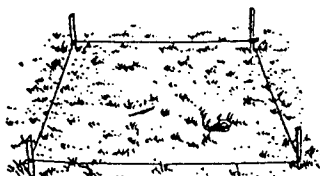


In-ground Worm Bin

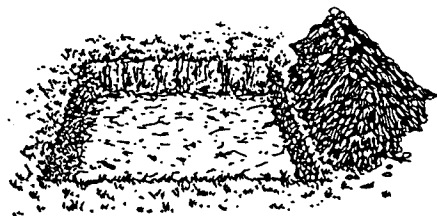
The optimum temperature for the survival of the brown-nosed worm or 'red wiggler' is 55-77 degrees Fahrenheit. Because area temperatures often exceed and/or fall short of the optimum conditions, building a bin and pit together can be a worthwhile solution. The earth is generally dug out to a depth of 16 to 24 inches, and boards are used to extend the pit into an aboveground bin.

*For the gardener who seeks to build a compost/worm pit for the first time, here are some basic instructions:

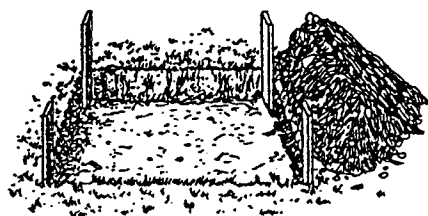
- Stake off an area 3 to 4 feet wide and as long as you wish the pit to be.



- Excavate the earth from this area to a depth of 16 to 24 inches. (If you live where winter temperatures get down to -10°F or colder, make it 24 inches). Pile the excavated soil to one side, in as compact a heap as possible, for later addition to the pit.



- Drive 2 x 4 stakes into the four corners of the pit, if you will be using boards. A layer of 1/4-inch, rustproof wire mesh in the bottom of the pit will protect your earthworms from moles.



- Nail boards all around the pit. Keep one end open so you can work with the material. Use stakes to hold loose boards in this area. Add boards on top of each other, leaving about 1/4 inch between each for aeration. Add boards only as the pile of materials requires them for support. The boards aboveground need never be higher than 16 inches above the ground surface; if the pit is 16 inches deep, this will mean a total of 32 inches of vertical board area. (Remember that these earthworms will not work more than 6 to 8 inches below the surface of the heap, no matter how high it is built.)

